

## EDUCATION, SCIENCE AND TRAINING

### SENATE LEGISLATION COMMITTEE - QUESTIONS ON NOTICE 2003-2004 ADDITIONAL ESTIMATES HEARING

**Outcome:** 1  
**Output Group:** ARC

#### **DEST Question No. E749\_04**

Senator Stott Despoja provided in writing.

#### **Question:**

Will the ARC be required to modify, or add to, its own four priority research areas (nano- and bio-materials, genome/phenome research, complex/intelligent systems and photon science and technology), in light of the enhancements to the national research priorities, given that 34% of ARC's 2003 funding allocations for National Competitive Grants Programme is allocated to these 4 areas?

Are the ARC's priorities skewed even more towards Science Engineering and Technology areas through these 4 priority areas?

What processes will be set in place in the ARC to ensure its research funding is not too concentrated towards Science Engineering and Technology areas, given the Government's own acknowledgement of the importance of Humanities and Social Sciences to the national research effort.

#### **Answer:**

*ARC research priorities*

The ARC has provided the following response:

The four ARC priority areas for research (nano- and bio-materials, genome/phenome research, complex/intelligent systems, and photon science and technology) applied to the 2003 new funding round only.

Funding rules for the ARC's National Competitive Grants Program (NCGP) specify selection criteria that address, among other things, national benefit and, specifically, "the potential for the research to contribute to the Designated National Research Priorities". The funding rules list the Government's four areas of national research priority and the priority goals that are associated with these. The funding rules have been amended to include those goals relating to the social sciences and humanities that were added to the original goals in November 2003.

The *ARC Strategic Action Plan 2003-2005* identifies as one of the ARC's key objectives to "develop and maintain a broad foundation of high-quality world-class research across a wide range of disciplines". The ARC monitors closely the distribution of NCGP funding across research disciplines and makes information about this available on its website ([www.arc.gov.au](http://www.arc.gov.au)).